Attachment C

Comments on shortcomings of the Fourth running of the COS Seminar, and recommendations for changes in content and method.

My main criticism of the course was that I did not crystallize in advance in my own mind the concrete learning units which went to make up the course, and that I failed to summarize the lesson at the end of each unit. Also, I have now reviewed OTR texts on teaching methods, specifically "Guidelines for Effective Teaching" (OTR-P1-61 of Jan 61), and have arrived at a clearer (to me) conceptual approach to the problem of teaching skills to our COS-Designates.

Before proceeding to outline how I think the next course should be presented, I would like to set down my understanding of the relevant terminology, so that we can all be talking the same language.

    a. The function of any OTR course is to teach something;

    b. Learning can take place in various ways, some of which are as follows:

        (1) By reading prepared texts. In this case the teacher should devise some means either orally or in writing to verify that learning has taken place;

        (2) By listening to lectures. When questions are permitted at the end of the lecture, this provides the instructor some insight as to whether learning has taken place;

        (3) By the conference method. Conferences must be preceded by some sort of input, such as reading, or lectures. At least students should start with roughly the same experience pattern. The instructor then (i.e., after ascertaining that the above input has been put in), proceeds by introducing questions, to create discussion amongst the students and to lead them to the point where they reach certain conclusions DESIRED BY THE INSTRUCTOR. (Note: apparently theory holds that a group of conferees will not be likely to come up with valid alternative approaches to the problem at hand, although the instructor should obviously be alert to identify any new approaches and earmark them for detailed examination later.)

(4) A <u>symposium</u> seeks to arrive at a set of valid principles for the subsequent guidance of all concerned with the subject. It does this by having a very loose agenda. Results are recorded by a secretary, and out of this exchange of views should emerge a fabric of ideas which action officers in the future may draw on in order to improve their performance.

(5) In the <u>seminar</u> we seek to add to our present stock of knowledge, and we do this by having students perform original research and investigation, then present their findings and conclusions to their colleagues in the seminar for advice, criticism, etc. This approach is valid only for students who are sufficiently advanced to be able to add to our present stock of knowledge.

Upon reviewing the above-noted OTR Handbook on effective teaching, I perceive on page 18 that "In many of our (Agency) courses, seminars are planned (apparently the author meant to say misplanned) for what are in fact class discussions......this method of instruction is not applicable generally throughout courses of training in the Agency".

In other words, we are sometimes given to calling an OTR course a seminar because it sounds high-level, or informal, or advanced, when we actually have no intention of conducting a seminar. We even find the phrase "true seminar" cropping up as though there were some other accepted meaning to the word. Like saying a horse is not a true automobile.

Now I believe that there may <u>be</u> a place for seminars in our scheme of things, but I also imagine that what is wanted at the moment is a straight course of instruction designed for COS-designates. Only we should not be apologetic about this, as though there were no specific skills which the COS can be required to master in preparation for his assignment.

One might perhaps argue that any COS-Designate ought to be mature enough to take a set of written essays and absorb what he needed from them and thus acquire these specific skills. However, the best of text books lack clarity here and there and for best results an instructor familiar with the subject matter is required to ensure full learning, and to verify through the means of written or oral examinations that learning has taken place.

Further to teaching methods. There was some sentiment among the students in the fourth running of the COS course in favor of having responsible guest lecturers speak, answer questions, then leave, so that the class might discuss among itself the validity or non-validity of what he had expounded. In the rest of this paper I will call this the Guest-Lecturer-Class-Conference (GL/CC) method.

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The use of panels of experts is in order when it is desired to bring out opposing viewpoints on the subject at hand, or to illuminate different aspects of the problem. It is suited to teaching approaches to problems where there is no one predetermined answer or solution. To be useful it must be followed by class discussion after the experts have left, to permit the students through free discussion to clarify in their own minds why in this case plural approaches are valid.

My tentative conclusion is that in teaching our COS-designates, we can and should make use of all the above-noted methods, even including the assignment of orignal research projects to selected students, the results to be presented to the group in seminar fashion. The rest of this paper will be devoted to an effort to identify and break down the skills peculiar to the COS job, in tabular form, and to suggest in each case which teaching method or methods would probably be best suited to teach what we want taught, together with our views on the best speakers, the most qualified authorities, how much time should be allotted, and what means should be used to verify that learning has taken place.

On the specific subject of valid seminar subjects, my thought would be to take as point of departure selected staff studies, such as the Foreign Intelligence Series (of which six have been published to date) and ask qualified students to delve into their own experience, consult all available knowledgeable officers, and present a report of findings to the class, thus up-dating the publication and in the process forcing all the students to re-think the problem.

In addition to questions of content and method, we have been re-examining the questions having to do with the advantages of full-time versus part-time participation, and the advantages of moving a larger portion, if indeed not all of the course, to ☐ Although I believe that the impact would be greater if the whole course could be given at ☐ I think that even if you could get a quorum of COS-designates to ☐ for an extended period of time, it would be even more of a problem to get the large number of senior speakers to travel there for at most a one or two-hour talk. For the time being, I lean towards a full-time course at Headquarters. I think it would be better to get them for full time even if only for one week (ten days would be very good and two weeks would be perfect), rather than string it out over three weeks half time.

The question of classroom amenities is vexing. We ought to have a smaller room, more comfortable, with perhaps our own coffee maker, good acoustics, and good ventilation, without disturbing, extraneous noises. These amenities could help to set the mature, serious tone we want to achieve.

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Finally, it seems plain that a major factor in the learning process is motivation, and that if a majority of students in the class have not already in fact been designated as COS at some named station, then much of the material being taught is looked upon by the students as abstract, theoretical and of no immediate concern to them. In the future we should avoid this.

As a matter of general procedures, I plan to furnish every guest speaker well beforehand with a brief statement in writing of the slant I would like him to take, explaining where his talk fits in to the over-all thrust of the course. Wherever possible I plan to confer personally with each speaker to get his views on the course and his part in it.

In addition I propose to establish a continuing system for updating and revising course content, by interviewing returning COS's, division and staff chiefs, and by working with "doctrine collectors" such as [ ] who gets up the FI Staff Studies.

The attached proposed curriculum eliminates the outside lecturer, [ ] and proposes a talk by [ ] on general trends in counterinsurgency thinking. One hour is not enough time for a course in current events. On the other hand, a man like [ ] can provide much more meaningful clues to a COS class. We would obviously not be trying to duplicate the NIS course in one hour, but merely trying to set the course in time with the NIS, which we presume all the COS-designates will take.

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Attachment: Proposed Curriculum

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